



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

**TODD P. GRAVES**

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Contact Don Ledford, Public Affairs • (816) 426-4220 • 400 East Ninth Street, Room 5510 • Kansas City, MO 64106

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **SPRINGFIELD GUN DEALER PLEADS GUILTY TO VIOLATING FEDERAL FIREARMS LAW**

**SPRINGFIELD, Mo.** – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Springfield, Mo., gun dealer pleaded guilty in federal court today to giving firearms to a felon.

**Barton Westerman**, 43, of Springfield, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Richard E. Dorr this afternoon to charges contained in a June 3, 2004, federal indictment.

On Dec. 16, 2003, federal agents executed search warrants at two Springfield gun dealerships. Agents seized 408 firearms from Gunsmoke Gun and Pawn, a pawn and firearms business at 4305 W. Chestnut Expressway in Springfield, as well as 211 firearms from the Westley Richards Agency, a business dealing in high-end and exotic hunting firearms at 4319 W. Chestnut Expressway. **Westerman** was a responsible party on the federal firearms license that was maintained by his mother, Nancy Francis, for both locations. Although **Westerman** knew that John Robert Francis, his father-in-law, was prohibited by federal law from being in possession of any firearm or ammunition, **Westerman** permitted him to have unlimited access to the firearms in the two businesses and even permitted him to handle firearms and conduct firearm transactions.

Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for anyone with a felony conviction to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. John Francis has a 1986 criminal felony conviction for conspiracy to engage in the business of dealing firearms without a license in Texas.

Under federal statutes, **Westerman** could be subject to a sentence of up to five years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$250,000. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard E. Monroe. It was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; the Springfield, Mo., Police Department; the Greene County, Mo., Sheriff's Department; Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation; and the Railroad Retirement Board.

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This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

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